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## Preface

# Kant and the Lawfulness of Nature

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**Michela Massimi:** The University of Edinburgh; [michela.massimi@ed.ac.uk](mailto:michela.massimi@ed.ac.uk)

This special issue of *Kant-Studien* collects six papers resulting from the first-year workshop of the Leverhulme Trust international network *Kant and the Laws of Nature* (IN-081), Edinburgh, 27–28 June 2013. The overarching theme is Kant's view about the lawfulness of nature. What is a law of nature, for Kant? What makes nature a lawful system? These questions have been at the center of an important literature and the present collection aims to shed new light on some historical, metaphysical, and epistemological issues in this ongoing debate.

The collection opens with an essay by Eric Watkins, which reconstructs the broader historical and philosophical context against which Kant's view was elaborated, namely laws in the natural sciences and in jurisprudence. Watkins argues that necessity is a central feature of Kant's view of laws, whereby necessity takes the form of either determination or obligation, respectively, in the laws of nature and the moral law. The final picture is a unified account of Kant's conception of law, which is central to Kant's overall theoretical and practical philosophy.

Nomological necessity is also a central feature of Michela Massimi's paper, which looks at the Newtonian governing conception of law and its legacy for the pre-Critical Kant. Latching onto Watkins's analysis of necessity as determination, Massimi argues that the young Kant around 1763 developed a governing conception of laws, which was meant to answer some of the open problems left by the Newtonian view.

And while Konstantin Pollok argues for the role that the Aristotelian-Scholastic matter-form distinction played in shaping Kant's view about the legislative role of the understanding and what he calls Kant's *transcendental hylomorphism*; Michael Friedman draws our attention to causal necessity in empirical laws. Friedman sees Kant's mature view on laws of nature as a response to Hume and as a way of transforming empirical rules in necessary and universally valid laws.

Knowledge of empirical laws is the focus of the last two essays in this special issue. Peter McLaughlin analyses the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic and the arguments given there for the systematic unity of nature, and the ideas of reason as a way of searching for the lawfulness of nature. Andrew Chignell, on the other hand, takes laws of nature and our background knowledge of them to play a

key role in defining what he calls “empirical real possibility”, and the modal condition that he sees as central to Kant’s theory of knowledge.

We hope the present collection can provide the reader with refreshingly new perspectives on central and open questions in Kant scholarship. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the Leverhulme Trust for making possible the workshop, where these papers were presented and discussed. I thank also James Collin for help with proofreading and copyediting this special issue.